

KEMI Journal of Educational Leadership and Management

KJELM

[ISSN 3079-4048]

Volume: 2 Issue: 3 | Nov-2026

School leadership and competency-based assessment for learners with disabilities in Kenya: A focused documentary review

Peter Njofu Namasaka[1], **Caren Musungu**[2]

The Children's Guild School of Prince George's County, Maryland, United States[1], *VIA Beroun, Czech Republic*[2]

Corresponding Author Email: njofu8@gmail.com

Cite this article in APA

https://doi.org/10.68147/f1c617d4

Copyright: ©2026 by the author(s). Open access under CC BY.

Abstract

Competency-based assessment (CBA) requires teachers to gather and interpret evidence of learning, including through adaptations for learners with disabilities. This focused documentary review examines implementation difficulties in Kenya and the school leadership functions relevant to addressing them. It synthesizes 12 recent scholarly sources (2021–2026), alongside official assessment and policy documents, using policy enactment theory to distinguish professional, material, situated and external conditions. The secondary studies reviewed identify concerns relating to teacher preparation, assessment adaptation, specialized resources, workload and coordination. Evidence from disability-focused studies is considered separately from broader research on competency-based curriculum implementation. School leadership may support professional learning, instructional guidance, resource prioritization and coordination, but these functions operate within staffing, funding and national assessment constraints. The targeted search provides a synthesis of patterns in the reviewed literature, rather than an exhaustive account of the evidence. Further empirical research is needed on leadership and disability-responsive CBA in Kenyan schools.

Key terms: competency-based assessment; learners with disabilities; school leadership; policy enactment; special education; inclusive education; Kenya

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Competency-based education in Kenya shifted the emphasis of assessment from the reproduction of content towards demonstration of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values in meaningful contexts. The Kenya National Examinations Council describes competency-based assessment (CBA) as learner-centred,

continuous and comprehensive, drawing on both formative and summative approaches and focusing on what learners can do. For learners following the stage-based pathway, the CBA framework and training manual further require teachers to use authentic tasks, varied assessment tools, adapted procedures, learner profiles, rubrics, portfolios and other forms of evidence suited to individual learning needs (KNEC, 2021a, 2021b).

In this article, competency-based education (CBE) refers to the wider educational approach, competency-based curriculum (CBC) to its curriculum organisation, and CBA to the collection and interpretation of assessment evidence. These concepts are related but are not interchangeable. “Learners with disabilities” is used broadly across disability categories and school placements; the available studies, however, address particular populations and settings rather than every disability category. Abbreviations used below include special needs education (SNE), Teachers Service Commission (TSC), Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE), Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC), Kenya Education Management Institute (KEMI), and research question (RQ).

For learners with disabilities, assessment is also situated within a broader policy commitment to inclusive, equitable and relevant education. The Sector Policy for Learners and Trainees with Disabilities identifies assessment, specialised learning resources, assistive technology, capacity building, curriculum, financing, collaboration and quality assurance as linked areas of implementation (Ministry of Education, 2018). The Basic Education Regulations additionally recognise regular schools, special institutions and regular schools with special needs units as legitimate placements for learners with special needs, underscoring the diversity of settings within which assessment policy must operate (Republic of Kenya, 2015).

Policy expectations, however, do not translate automatically into consistent classroom practice. Recent Kenyan literature points to recurring difficulties in professional preparation, formative assessment, disability-responsive adaptation, specialised resources and school-level support. These difficulties occur within institutions where headteachers organise resources, coordinate professional learning and oversee curriculum implementation. School leadership is therefore relevant because it helps shape the conditions under which teachers enact assessment requirements.

The contribution of this review is analytical rather than a claim that no prior Kenyan research exists. It brings together disability-specific assessment studies, general CBC leadership research and policy requirements, then distinguishes the conclusions supported directly by disability-focused evidence from those inferred across these related literatures. Recent Kenyan research also links leadership conditions to CBC implementation through instructional support, staff development, supervision and resource mobilisation. What remains less developed is evidence at the precise intersection of school leadership, competency-based assessment and learners with disabilities. The present review addresses that narrower problem by locating where CBA implementation difficulties arise and examining the documented role of school leadership in responding to them.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Kenyan assessment policy requires competency-based assessment to be continuous, varied and responsive to learner needs, while disability policy calls for appropriate assessment accommodation, specialised resources, capacity building and quality assurance. Disability-focused studies identify challenges in assessment adaptation and interpretation. Broader CBC/CBA studies describe difficulties in teacher preparation and formative assessment that may also be relevant but cannot establish disability-specific effects. Studies of both kinds report shortages of specialised resources and school-level resource and staffing constraints (Andiema, 2021; Anyango et al., 2024; Macheso et al., 2024a, 2024b; Musango et al., 2026; Owino et al., 2023; Wafubwa, 2021). The difficulty is therefore unlikely to reside in a single teacher deficit or a single policy provision. It is distributed across the professional, material and

organisational conditions in which assessment is enacted. At the same time, recent leadership studies address CBC implementation more broadly more often than they address CBA for learners with disabilities specifically. Without a focused synthesis, recommendations risk becoming generic calls for training or resources without identifying where leadership action is most relevant and where problems exceed the authority of the school head. This study therefore examines the main loci of CBA implementation difficulty and the role of school leadership in responding to them.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

To identify where difficulties arise in implementing competency-based assessment for learners with disabilities in Kenya.

To examine the role of school leadership in addressing these implementation difficulties.

1.3 Research Questions

Where do difficulties arise in implementing competency-based assessment for learners with disabilities in Kenya?

What role does school leadership play in addressing these implementation difficulties?

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by policy enactment theory associated with Ball, Maguire and Braun. The framework distinguishes enactment from a simple implementation model. Policies are interpreted, translated and worked on by actors in particular institutional settings rather than transferred unchanged from policy text to classroom practice (Braun et al., 2010; Ball et al., 2012). This perspective is useful for CBA because national assessment requirements are enacted through schools that differ in staffing, resources, learner profiles, professional knowledge and access to external support.

For analysis, situated conditions refer to school placement, learner profiles and local organisational arrangements; professional conditions refer to staff expertise, preparation and working relationships; material conditions refer to staffing, time, assistive technology and assessment resources; and external conditions refer to national policy, funding, deployment and specialist support. A finding could be linked to more than one context where the reviewed source supported that interpretation. These categories are used to examine where difficulties arise, not to imply that the categories are independent or directly measured in every study.

Policy enactment scholarship draws attention to situated, professional, material and external contexts that shape how schools work with policy. Recent policy-enactment scholarship continues to use these contextual dimensions to analyse how institutional setting, professional experience, infrastructure and external pressures affect enactment (Scanlon, 2023). These dimensions provide a disciplined way of answering the first research question. Rather than treating 'challenges' as an undifferentiated list, the review asks where difficulties are located and how different conditions interact.

The framework also helps delimit the second research question. School leaders are policy actors with some capacity to interpret priorities, organise resources, coordinate staff and create opportunities for professional learning. Their agency is nevertheless constrained by staffing allocations, funding, specialist services, national assessment rules and the availability of adapted materials. The framework therefore avoids assuming a simple leadership-to-outcome causal chain. It treats leadership as one part of the context through which CBA is enacted. This framework therefore provides the bridge between identifying

the location of implementation difficulties and examining the scope of leadership action within those conditions.

2.2 Empirical Studies

Recent Kenyan scholarship relevant to this review falls into three overlapping strands. The first concerns assessment and teacher preparedness. Andiema (2021), Owino et al. (2023) and Musango et al. (2026) examine special-needs education or disability-related practice; Wafubwa (2021) provides a broader comparative discussion of assessment guidance and formative assessment.

The second strand concerns school leadership and CBC implementation. Awili and Begi (2021), Waruingi et al. (2022), Kibwebwe and Mutilu (2023), Okeyo et al. (2024), Anyango et al. (2024) and Twarary (2025) examine instructional leadership, supervision, staffing, training or resource management. Anyango et al. (2024) is especially relevant because it is situated in special needs primary schools; the other leadership studies are used cautiously as broader CBC evidence.

A third strand concerns CBA implementation itself. Macheso et al. (2024a) examined the use of CBA tools and assessment types in Grade 6 across Trans-Nzoia, Bungoma and Busia Counties, using questionnaires with teachers and interviews with headteachers. A related study by Macheso et al. (2024b) linked teacher efficacy to CBA implementation in the same regional context. These studies bring assessment practice and school-level actors into the same evidence base, although neither is disability-specific. Read together with the disability and leadership literature, they support a focused synthesis while requiring caution where evidence is broader than disability-responsive assessment itself.

The studies differ in what they can establish. Andiema (2021), Owino et al. (2023) and Musango et al. (2026) concern disability or special-needs settings more directly; Musango et al. focuses specifically on assessment adaptation for learners with visual impairments. In contrast, Macheso et al. (2024a, 2024b) provide regional CBA evidence but are not disability-specific. Awili and Begi (2021), Waruingi et al. (2022), Okeyo et al. (2024) and Twarary (2025) illuminate leadership and implementation conditions in broader CBC settings. Their findings may inform plausible leadership responses, but cannot establish the effectiveness of those responses for learners with disabilities. The contrast is therefore one of population, setting and evidential reach rather than a contradiction that can be resolved by pooling unlike studies.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a qualitative desktop research design based on documentary review and interpretive synthesis. The approach was selected because the research questions concern patterns already documented in policy, official assessment guidance and Kenyan empirical research rather than new data collected from human participants. The 12 scholarly sources shown in Table 1 constitute the documented core corpus. This number counts the listed scholarly items, not official documents or foundational theory texts. The search combinations are described in Section 3.1; historical platform-specific queries, retrieval totals, screening decisions and search logs were not preserved. No comprehensive or reproducible search is claimed. The two Macheso et al. (2024a, 2024b) papers are treated as separate publications, while their overlapping regional setting is considered when interpreting the evidence; their results should not be counted as independent replications of a disability-specific finding.

3.1 Search and Selection of Sources

Sources were identified through targeted searches conducted in August 2026 using journal platforms, African Journals Online, university repositories and targeted searches of official and scholarly domains. Search combinations paired "competency-based assessment" or "competency-based curriculum" with

"learners with disabilities", "special needs", "headteacher", "school leadership", "instructional leadership", "assessment adaptation" and "Kenya". The search was focused rather than systematic. For scholarly literature, the eligibility window was 2021–2026. Eligible sources had to concern Kenya and contribute directly to at least one of three domains: CBA/assessment; CBC/CBE implementation for learners with disabilities or special needs; or school leadership in CBC/CBA implementation.

Coding followed the two stated research questions and the four policy-enactment contexts. Where a source related to several contexts, its contribution was interpreted across the relevant categories rather than forced into one exclusive theme. The available records do not establish independent duplicate extraction, an intercoder agreement procedure or formal study-quality appraisal. Accordingly, this review does not assign quantitative quality scores or weight findings as if a standardised appraisal had been completed. Interpretations are qualified by the study population, design and directness of evidence. Table 1 provides the source-to-theme audit trail at the level supported by the available record.

Potentially relevant records were screened for date, Kenyan setting, source type and direct relevance to the research questions. Duplicate or alternate copies of the same study, sources outside the 2021–2026 scholarly-literature window, non-Kenyan studies and items that did not address assessment, disability or school leadership closely enough were excluded. The review did not preserve a complete record-by-record search and screening log; consequently, PRISMA-style identification and exclusion counts cannot be reconstructed reliably and are not reported. The core synthesis therefore comprises the eligible recent scholarly sources documented in Table 1, together with official KNEC, Ministry of Education and legal documents used to define the policy requirements being enacted. Older official documents were retained where they remained governing policy, and foundational policy-enactment sources were retained to establish the theoretical framework.

The evidence in Table 1 is interpreted in two groups: direct disability-related studies (Andiema, 2021; Owino et al., 2023; Anyango et al., 2024; Musango et al., 2026) and broader CBC/CBA or leadership studies. Wafubwa (2021) provides comparative assessment context rather than primary disability-specific findings. The classification concerns relevance to disability-responsive CBA, not a formal appraisal of methodological quality.

3.2 Data Extraction and Analysis

For each included scholarly source, the review extracted publication year, setting, participants or evidence base, research design and findings relevant to either research question. Analysis proceeded in two stages. First, evidence relating to CBA implementation difficulties was coded using the policy-enactment categories of professional, material, situated and external conditions. Second, statements concerning headteachers or school-level leadership were coded by function, including professional learning, instructional guidance, resource mobilisation, coordination and supervision. Direct disability-specific evidence was distinguished from broader CBC leadership evidence so that general leadership findings were not presented as if they had been demonstrated specifically for learners with disabilities.

3.3 Summary of Included Recent Literature

Table 1 summarises the recent scholarly sources used in the core synthesis. Official policy and legal documents are excluded because they establish requirements rather than report implementation evidence.

Author (Year)	Setting, sample and design	Key contribution / RQ	Policy context and evidence scope

Andiema (2021)	Kapsaret; 69 SNE teachers Survey	Teacher competence in evaluating CBC; formative-assessment preparedness. RQ: RQ1	Context: Professional Evidence scope: Direct: special-needs teachers
Awili & Begi (2021)	Nairobi; early-years schools Mixed methods	Instructional leadership related to CBC implementation. RQ: RQ2	Context: Situated / professional Evidence scope: Indirect: general early-years CBC
Wafubwa (2021)	Kenya focus Comparative review	Assessment guidance, formative-assessment culture and teacher support. RQ: RQ1	Context: Professional / external Evidence scope: Indirect: comparative assessment review
Waruingi et al. (2022)	Kiambu; 15 principals + 15 deputies Qualitative	Staff development, training, staffing and finance challenges. RQ: RQ2	Context: Material / professional Evidence scope: Indirect: general CBC leadership
Kibwebwe & Mutilu (2023)	Likoni; public primary schools Empirical management study	Headteacher roles in resources and trained personnel. RQ: RQ2	Context: Material / situated Evidence scope: Indirect: general CBC leadership
Owino et al. (2023)	Nairobi; early years/disability Empirical study of CBC implementation and SNE teacher training	SNE/CBC training and staffing conditions. RQ: RQ1	Context: Professional / situated Evidence scope: Direct: disability-related CBC; not specific CBA
Anyango et al. (2024)	Rarieda; special-needs primary schools Empirical study	Headteacher contribution to CBC in special-needs schools. RQ: RQ1/RQ2	Context: Material / situated Evidence scope: Direct: special-needs schools; CBC broadly
Macheso et al. (2024a)	Trans-Nzoia, Bungoma & Busia; Grade 6 teachers + headteachers Mixed methods	Extent of CBA tool/type use; policy, resources, monitoring and professional development. RQ: RQ1; RQ2 (contextual)	Context: Professional / material / situated / external Evidence scope: Indirect: general Grade 6 CBA
Macheso et al. (2024b)	Trans-Nzoia, Bungoma & Busia; Grade 6 teachers and headteachers (246 sampled schools reported across the study) Mixed methods / correlational	Teacher efficacy positively associated with CBA implementation; headteachers interviewed. RQ: RQ1/RQ2	Context: Professional / situated Evidence scope: Indirect: general Grade 6 CBA

Okeyo et al. (2024)	Kisii Central; heads + teachers Descriptive survey	Instructional training and supervisory challenges. RQ: RQ2	Context: Professional / situated Evidence scope: Indirect: general CBC leadership
Twarary (2025)	Loitoktok; 27 heads, 180 teachers + stakeholders Triangulation	Headteacher resource management and CBC implementation. RQ: RQ2	Context: Material / situated Evidence scope: Indirect: general CBC leadership
Musango et al. (2026)	3 special schools; 3 heads, 44 teachers, 36 learners Study of assessment adaptations for learners with visual impairments	Adaptation of CBC assessment for visual impairment; added workload. RQ: RQ1	Context: Professional / material Evidence scope: Direct: visual impairment and assessment

4.0 RESULTS/FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

4.1 Where Difficulties Arise in Implementing CBA for Learners with Disabilities

Professional knowledge and disability responsive assessment

Professional capacity emerges as the clearest professional-context difficulty. Across the recent literature, the recurring issue is not merely attendance at CBC training but whether teachers can translate assessment principles into formative, differentiated and disability-responsive practice. Under a policy-enactment lens, the difficulty lies where national assessment expectations meet uneven professional knowledge within schools (Andiema, 2021; Owino et al., 2023). Wafubwa (2021) provides broader Kenyan assessment context but not direct evidence on disability-specific adaptations.

Assessment adaptation, interpretation and consistency

Musango et al. (2026), studying assessment adaptations for learners with visual impairments, reports both that teachers interpret assessment procedures inconsistently, raising concerns about validity and fairness, and that CBC guidelines facilitate adaptation. These findings qualify any simple account of implementation failure: guidance can enable adaptations even where interpretation varies. Evidence from this population cannot automatically be generalised to every disability category. The relevant situated and professional conditions are teachers' interpretation of guidance, learner needs and the support available to implement appropriate adaptations.

Material resources and assistive technologies

Material conditions constitute a third locus. The reviewed leadership and special-needs literature converges on funding, staffing, specialised materials and assistive resources as conditions shaping what schools can implement. Macheso et al. (2024a) likewise identify resource allocation and monitoring as important supports for CBA implementation. This separates willingness from capacity: teachers and headteachers may support CBA while lacking the material means to enact particular adaptations (Waruingi et al., 2022; Anyango et al., 2024; Macheso et al., 2024a; Twarary, 2025). General leadership studies identify funding and resource-management constraints (Waruingi et al., 2022; Twarary, 2025); the disability-specific study by Anyango et al. (2024) provides a more directly relevant school-setting perspective. These studies do not establish that any particular resource allocation improves disability-

specific CBA outcomes.

Workload, time and organisational coordination

A fourth difficulty is organisational. Continuous assessment requires repeated observation, documentation, feedback and adaptation, and disability-responsive assessment can add preparation and recording demands. Musango et al. (2026) report that adapting assessment can involve substantial extra work, while Macheso et al. (2024a) show that the use of CBA tools and types depends on school-level implementation conditions. When specialised staff are limited, these demands accumulate at classroom and school level. Workload is therefore an organisational issue involving staffing, time allocation and coordination.

External support and system capacity

Not all implementation conditions can be solved within the school. The Sector Policy for Learners and Trainees with Disabilities identifies quality assurance, specialised support, capacity building and resource provision as system responsibilities as well as school concerns. In policy-enactment terms, school practice is shaped by external conditions such as teacher deployment, funding, assessment guidance and specialist services. This limits explanations that attribute CBA difficulties solely to classroom teachers or headteachers.

4.2 Role of School Leadership in Addressing Implementation Difficulties

Organising professional learning

For RQ2, the strongest cross-study leadership pattern is the organisation of professional learning. Leadership studies repeatedly identify training and staff development as implementation conditions, while disability-focused studies show why generic CBC orientation may be insufficient. The leadership role is therefore to identify competence gaps, facilitate relevant learning and create mechanisms for follow-up within the school (Waruingi et al., 2022; Owino et al., 2023; Anyango et al., 2024; Okeyo et al., 2024).

Instructional guidance, monitoring and feedback

A second leadership function is instructional guidance and supervision. Awili and Begi (2021) found instructional leadership related to CBC implementation but noted that heads often concentrated on administrative roles. Okeyo et al. (2024) similarly identified training and supervisory challenges. Macheso et al. (2024a) included headteachers directly in a study of CBA implementation and recommended stronger monitoring, policy support and professional development. Taken together, these findings identify instructional guidance as a plausible school-level mechanism, while the limited disability-specific evidence prevents a stronger causal claim.

Mobilising and prioritising resources

A third leadership function is resource prioritisation and mobilisation. Across Kiambu, Rarieda and Loitoktok, leadership studies identify finance or resource management as recurring implementation conditions. In special-needs settings, the issue is more specific because assessment may depend on adapted materials and assistive technologies. Leadership can prioritise and coordinate resources, but inadequate public funding or specialist provision cannot be solved by headteachers alone (Waruingi et al., 2022; Anyango et al., 2024; Twarary, 2025).

Coordinating internal and external support

Disability-responsive assessment may require expertise beyond a single classroom, making coordination an important responsibility for headteachers. They can organise collaboration among teachers, parents, special-needs personnel and external education support structures and ensure that assessment-related information is communicated appropriately. Anyango et al. (2024) places headteacher practice within special-needs primary schools, while Macheso et al. (2024a) demonstrates that headteachers are directly involved in school-level CBA implementation alongside Grade 6 teachers. KEMI's Effective School Leadership training for junior school leaders also includes the Competency-Based Assessment Framework, instructional leadership, curriculum delivery support, and institutional governance and quality assurance (Kenya Education Management Institute [KEMI], 2024). Leadership therefore includes connecting assessment work within the school to professional and system support beyond the individual classroom.

Leadership as a mediating rather than sufficient condition

The evidence does not support treating leadership as a complete solution. Headteachers cannot independently create nationally funded specialist posts, manufacture assistive technologies or substitute for disability-specific professional preparation. Policy enactment theory therefore provides a more defensible interpretation: leadership mediates how schools respond to policy demands under particular professional and material conditions. Effective leadership can reduce some implementation problems by coordinating, prioritising and supporting, but system-level constraints can continue to limit what is possible.

4.3 Claim-to-Evidence and Leadership-Context Matrix

Table 2. Claim-to-Evidence and Leadership-Context Matrix

Claim and supporting sources	Evidence reach and context	Leadership implication
Teacher assessment preparation Sources: Andiema (2021); Owino et al. (2023)	Disability-related CBC/teacher preparation; not direct tests of leadership effects Context: Professional	Identify needs; arrange coaching and peer review
Adaptation consistency and enabling guidance Sources: Musango et al. (2026)	Direct assessment evidence for visual impairment only Context: Professional / situated	Support consistent interpretation of adaptation guidance
Resources and specialist provision Sources: Anyango et al. (2024); Waruingi et al. (2022); Twarary (2025)	Special-needs CBC plus indirect general leadership evidence Context: Material / external	Prioritise available resources; escalate system-level gaps
Supervision and staff development Sources: Awili & Begi (2021); Okeyo et al. (2024)	Indirect general CBC leadership evidence Context: Professional / situated	Organise instructional feedback and professional learning
Assessment tools and teacher efficacy Sources: Macheso et al. (2024a, 2024b); Wafubwa (2021)	Indirect general CBA and assessment evidence Context: Professional / external	Review tools and workload; do not generalise to all disabilities

4.4 Evidence Gap

The review also identifies a substantive evidence gap. Recent Kenyan scholarship contains disability-focused studies of teacher preparation and assessment adaptation, and a larger body on headteacher roles in CBC implementation. Far fewer studies examine how school leadership directly shapes disability-responsive CBA. This supports focused empirical research but does not justify claiming that no such evidence exists.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion on Research Question One

For research question one, disability-focused evidence identifies teacher preparation and assessment adaptation as relevant concerns (Andiema, 2021; Owino et al., 2023; Musango et al., 2026). Musango et al. (2026) also reports that CBC guidance can facilitate adaptation, even as inconsistent interpretation raises fairness concerns. Broader CBC/CBA studies report resource or organisational issues; Musango et al. (2026) provides direct evidence of additional adaptation workload for learners with visual impairments. Extending that finding to other disability categories is an analytical inference, not a directly tested result. Taken together, the sources suggest professional, material, situated and external conditions that merit investigation, not a ranked or causally established list of barriers across disability categories.

5.2 Conclusion on Research Question Two

For research question two, studies of general CBC leadership link school heads to staff development, instructional supervision and resource management (Awili & Begi, 2021; Waruingi et al., 2022; Okeyo et al., 2024; Twarary, 2025). Disability-related studies indicate why such functions might need specialist assessment knowledge (Owino et al., 2023; Musango et al., 2026). The proposed link between particular leadership actions and improved disability-responsive CBA remains an evidence-informed interpretation; the reviewed studies do not directly test its effect.

5.3 Recommendations

1. School-level: Headteachers should identify staff development needs in differentiated assessment and arrange peer support and follow-up. Supporting evidence: Andiema (2021) and Owino et al. (2023) concern disability-related teacher preparation; leadership studies such as Okeyo et al. (2024) are indirect. This is a proposed action, not an evaluated intervention.
2. School-level: Heads and teachers should review how assessment guidance is interpreted for individual learners, including fairness and consistency of adaptations. Supporting evidence: Musango et al. (2026), direct evidence for learners with visual impairments only. Extension to other disability categories requires testing.
3. School-level with national support: Schools should document specific needs for adapted materials and assistive technology and prioritise available funds transparently. Supporting evidence: Anyango et al. (2024), disability-related school context; Waruingi et al. (2022) and Twarary (2025), indirect general CBC resource-management evidence. Procurement and specialist staffing may exceed school authority.
4. National/system-level: The Ministry of Education, KNEC, TSC and KISE, with KEMI, should clarify assessment-adaptation guidance, specialist support and training responsibilities. Supporting

evidence: Musango et al. (2026) and national disability policy; the precise impact of such coordination is not established by this review.

5. Research-level: Test whether specific headteacher practices improve disability-responsive CBA using classroom observations, assessment records and learner-centred measures. This responds to the evidence gap between direct disability-assessment studies and broader CBC leadership studies; it is a research priority, not a reported empirical finding.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

This desktop review is limited by its reliance on published and publicly accessible secondary sources. The focused search may not have captured unpublished KEMI, KISE, county or school-level reports, and it was restricted to Kenya-focused English-language material. A further limitation is that a complete record-by-record search and screening log was not preserved; the review therefore cannot provide auditable PRISMA-style counts for records identified, excluded and retained. The recent scholarly corpus is relatively small and heterogeneous, and several leadership studies address CBC implementation broadly rather than CBA for learners with disabilities specifically. Some of the most directly relevant assessment evidence is recent, including Musango et al. (2026), so the evidence base should be interpreted cautiously. These limitations reinforce the need for direct empirical research on school leadership and disability-responsive CBA. No formal, standardised study-quality or risk-of-bias appraisal was conducted, limiting confidence in comparisons across research designs.

Ethics statement. This review uses published research and publicly accessible policy documents; no new data were collected from human participants. Ethical approval for primary data collection was therefore not sought. Sources are acknowledged in the references. The authors retain responsibility for source interpretation and the accuracy of the submitted manuscript.

References

1. Andiema, N. C. (2021). Teachers competencies in evaluation of competency based curriculum among special needs learners in Kenya. Global Journal of Educational Research, 19(2), 135–145. https://doi.org/10.4314/gjedr.v19i2.2
2. Anyango, H., Koros, P., & Barat, M. S. (2024). Headteachers in special needs primary schools and the implementation of the competence-based curriculum in Rarieda Sub-County, Siaya County, Kenya. Journal of Popular Education in Africa, 8(9), 129–147.
3. Awili, R., & Begi, N. (2021). Relationship between instructional leadership and implementation of competency-based curriculum in early years education in Nairobi City County, Kenya. Randwick International of Education and Linguistics Science Journal, 2(3), 476–488. https://doi.org/10.47175/rielsj.v2i3.280
4. Ball, S. J., Maguire, M., & Braun, A. (2012). How schools do policy: Policy enactments in secondary schools. Routledge.
5. Braun, A., Maguire, M., & Ball, S. J. (2010). Policy enactments in the UK secondary school: Examining policy, practice and school positioning. Journal of Education Policy, 25(4), 547–560. https://doi.org/10.1080/02680931003698544
6. Kenya Education Management Institute. (2024). Empowering junior school leaders: KEMI's role in advancing education in Kenya. https://www.kemi.ac.ke/empowering-junior-school-leaders-kemis-role-in-advancing-education-in-kenya/
7. Kenya National Examinations Council. (2021a). Competency based assessment: Stage based (SNE)

framework. KNEC.

8. Kenya National Examinations Council. (2021b). Teacher training manual for competency based assessment: Stage based pathway—Foundation level. KNEC.
9. Kibwebwe, M. S., & Mutilu, B. M. (2023). Influence of headteachers roles on implementation of competence based curriculum in public primary schools in Likoni Sub-County, Mombasa County, Kenya. International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science, 7(12), 52–64. https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2023.7012005
10. Macheso, I. S., Kati, R. O., & Wafula, R. W. (2024a). Implementation of competency based assessment in Kenya: Extent of utilization of competency based assessment tools and types. International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science, 8(6), 3124–3134. https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2024.806236
11. Macheso, I. S., Wafula, R. W., & Kati, R. O. (2024b). Teacher efficacy and implementation of competency based assessment in Western Kenya. International Journal of Research and Innovation in Applied Science, 9(8), 126–134. https://doi.org/10.51584/IJRIAS.2024.908011
12. Ministry of Education. (2018). Sector policy for learners and trainees with disabilities. Government of Kenya.
13. Musango, L. M., Murugami, M., & Buna, Y. D. (2026). Adaptations made on competency-based curriculum assessment procedures for learners with visual impairments in special primary schools in Kenya. Journal of Popular Education in Africa, 10(1), 31–50. https://ir-library.ku.ac.ke/handle/123456789/32849
14. Okeyo, E., Areba, G., & Obuba, E. (2024). Head teachers' instructional training and instructional supervisory challenges in the implementation of the competency-based curriculum in public primary schools in Kisii Central Sub-County. Journal of the Kenya National Commission for UNESCO, 4(2), 1–18. https://doi.org/10.62049/jkncu.v4i2.108
15. Owino, C. O., Bunyasi, B. A., & Kamau-Kangethe, R. W. (2023). Teachers' training in special needs education and implementation of competency-based curriculum for early years learners with disabilities in primary schools in Nairobi City County, Kenya. International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science, 7, 411–426.
16. Republic of Kenya. (2015). The Basic Education Regulations, 2015. Kenya Law.
17. Scanlon, D. (2023). A figurational viewpoint of the complexity of policy enactment: An opportunity for agonistic dialogue? The Curriculum Journal, 34, 385–399. https://doi.org/10.1002/curj.179
18. Twarary, I. (2025). Influence of headteachers' resource management practices on implementation of competency-based curriculum in public primary schools in Loitoktok Sub-County, Kajiado County, Kenya. Journal of Research Innovation and Implications in Education, 9(2), 1068–1078. https://doi.org/10.59765/jriie9-2-097
19. Wafubwa, R. N. (2021). Challenges of teaching and assessing the 21st-century competencies in Africa: A focus on the Kenyan new curriculum of basic education. East African Journal of Education Studies, 3(1), 96–105. https://doi.org/10.37284/eajes.3.1.332
20. Waruingi, A. W., Mbogo, R., & Mambo, A. (2022). Assessment of challenges faced by principals in the implementation of the competency-based curriculum in public primary schools in Kenya: A case of Kiambu County. Journal of Education, 2(2), 26–39. https://doi.org/10.70619/vol2iss2pp26-39